



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ARIZONA MAN SENTENCED TO 40 YEARS FOR SHOOTOUT WITH U.S. MARSHALS IN GILBERT

PHOENIX – Describing him as a “poster-boy for the effects of methamphetamine,” U.S. District Judge Paul G. Rosenblatt sentenced Joshua Wayne Trotter, 25, of Arizona, to 40 years in prison Monday afternoon. Trotter pleaded guilty on September 21, 2006 to seven counts of Assaulting a Federal Officer; one count of Use of a Firearm During and in Relation to a Crime of Violence, and one count of Unlawful Possession of a Firearm. The charges stem from a June 3, 2005 incident in which Trotter, who was residing in Gilbert, Ariz. at the time, opened fire on five U.S. Marshals, wounding one, when they attempted to arrest him on a federal warrant for a probation violation.

U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona Paul K. Charlton stated: “This is another example of how methamphetamine puts people’s lives at risk. Here we are fortunate the Marshals survived to testify against Mr. Trotter. We’re satisfied with the sentence and hope it serves as a reminder to others that methamphetamine destroys lives and risks destroying other people’s lives.”

On June 3, 2005, while Trotter was driving away from his residence at 3120 S. Lois Lane, two vehicles containing Deputy United States Marshals, Dennis Harkins, Ernest Grizzle and Josh Butout, pulled in front of Trotter’s vehicle and activated their emergency police lights. In an attempt to flee, Trotter placed his vehicle in reverse and accelerated rapidly. While Trotter drove in reverse, a third vehicle, containing Deputy U.S. Marshal Robert Morris and Special Deputy U.S. Marshal William Harkins, tried to block Trotter’s retreat. Using his vehicle as a weapon, Trotter intentionally used force to strike this third vehicle by crashing into the front end of the Marshal’s vehicle thereby disabling it.

At the time of the initial crash, Trotter’s car became stuck on the U.S. Marshal vehicle. Deputy U.S. Marshal Robert Morris, while wearing a police tactical vest fully marked with police identification, exited his vehicle and announced that he was a police officer and ordered Trotter to stop. Trotter refused to stop and continued accelerating causing his wheels to spin and smoke while pushing the Marshals’ vehicle backwards. Fearing imminent danger of death or serious physical injury to Special Deputy Harkins and others in the area, Deputy Morris fired two shots at the vehicle. Trotter’s vehicle subsequently broke free and traveled in reverse until it crashed into a light pole. At that time, Deputies Harkins, Grizzle and Butout positioned their vehicles in front of Trotter’s car. While exiting their vehicles, the Deputies announced they were the police and ordered Trotter to show his hands. Trotter, knowing the Deputies were law enforcement officers, pulled an Imez 9mm Makarov handgun and opened fire. Trotter discharged his weapon five times in the direction of all five deputies and police reports show he reloaded his weapon in the course of the shootout. Trotter shot Deputy Harkins in the hand.

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At the sentencing, Deputy Harkins recounted how after shouting clearly at Trotter "Police!" and holding his own service revolver out in front of his face, that Trotter drew his gun and shot Harkins in the hand. But for his hand blocking the shot, Deputy Harkins said he could have been killed or gravely wounded. As Harkins lay down in the seat of his vehicle, he saw an additional bullet pass through his windshield, and heard other Marshals shouting "Police!" and commanding Trotter show his hands. Harkins said he heard Trotter shout out an expletive at the Marshals before continuing to fire on them.

"Of the tens of thousands of arrests U.S. Marshals make every year, only a handful decide to shoot it out with the cops. This is one of them," said Deputy Harkins, pointing to Trotter.

Trotter was shot twice before surrendering. Trotter has five prior felony convictions, including two involving the assault of other police officers, and one pending case in Coconino County Court involving the assault of a family member. He is considered a career offender.

U.S. Marshal for the District of Arizona David Gonzales stated: "I believe justice was served in the courtroom today. I'm glad none of the deputies or law enforcement officers involved in this shooting were critically injured or killed. Judge Rosenblatt sent a strong message to fugitives that if you attempt to kill a U.S. Marshal or law enforcement officer, the repercussions are severe."

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Gilbert Police Department. The prosecution was handled by David A. Pimsner, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix..

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